

## ATV Mobility Options

Once we have decent ice and are no longer limited to fishing shorelines, mobility becomes a key component in our level of success as we are now able to fully explore every nook and cranny of the lake. As with most things, having a tried and true system in place not only keeps things simple and organized, but also contributes heavily in keeping a good attitude and that definitely equates to more fish on the ice.

The first order of business is our chosen mode of transportation. ATV's and UTV's are the most common and generally most preferred units...that is until deep snow becomes an issue. There are a couple of solutions that will help in this regard. The first one being tracks (which can be quite expensive and hard on your machine) or going a much simpler route with the J-Wheelz that I employ in these conditions. Basically, they amount to lightweight wheel extensions for all four wheels. This allows for not only more flotation, but due to the large paddles-dramatically increased traction. All of this comes at a fraction of the cost of tracks and in no way limits your machine for high speed on road uses. You can even go a step further and chain up the rear wheels and screw in studs for the fronts to add some real bite to your rig. It's quite impressive what you can through and if you are to encounter more than this system will handle; it's time to resort to a snowmobile anyway.

Now that we are able to traverse some adverse conditions, we need a way to transport all of our gear. This can be done by heaping everything onto your portable shack and dragging it behind or by using a trailer. This is the ideal method as we have much more room to place and access whatever we choose to use without having to unpack after each and every move. Weight is an issue here as the heavier the trailer is, obviously the more difficult it will be to pull through snow. Aluminum beats steel and wood constructed trailers hands down in this regard. Plus, they just look darn nice and are nearly maintenance free. No rusting, wood rotting mess when you go to hook up each fall. I will be using Aluma's ultra slick Model 8112 this season, which has a rear bi-fold gate/ramp as well as railing on the sides that quickly convert to side ramps if you want to load multiple ATV's from the side. Not only is loading and unloading a snap, there is plenty of room for anything you could conceive taking along, yet compact enough to remain easy to tow under most any conditions.

Now we can trick out our ATV itself a bit by using an auger rack with the best I have found from Johnson's Cargo Systems. Keeps your auger safe and secure over the roughest terrain and within arm's reach at all times. The ultimate accessory is Otter's Monster Box. This mounts on the back of your ATV and will easily accommodate more gear than most folks even own. A great way to ensure your expensive Underwater Cameras and Vexilars are well protected. It even comes with mounting points for bucket holders, rod cases, extra fuel, etc. making it the most comprehensive scheme ever devised for an ATV.

This should give you a few ideas as to what is available. With all of the tools at our disposal today, it doesn't take long to see what works best for you personally and to custom tailor a downright effective system.

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